

- ✓ Refer the case to the U.S. Department of State for denial of the noncustodial parent's passport.
- ✓ Seize the noncustodial parent's cars, vacation homes, boats, lottery winnings, funds from bank accounts and any business or personal property.
- ✓ Intercept the noncustodial parent's state and federal tax refunds, insurance claims, Worker's Compensation or Unemployment Compensation payments.
- ✓ Cloud the noncustodial parent's credit by referring the debt to credit reporting agencies.
- ✓ Seek civil contempt of court. The court may order the noncustodial parent to participate in a seek work program or order the noncustodial parent incarcerated until the child support debt is paid.
- ✓ Refer the case for prosecution of criminal nonsupport for failure to pay the child support. The court may fine the noncustodial parent up to \$10,000 or order the noncustodial parent incarcerated for up to five years.

## Custody and Visitation



Custody and visitation issues are not handled by DOR. DOR staff and attorneys are not authorized to provide help to either parent in such matters.

If you need assistance with custody or visitation, you may contact your attorney or the Probate and Family Court to help you with access and visitation.



## Other Considerations

DOR attorneys represent the Department of Revenue and do not represent either parent. Any violation of tax or welfare laws which comes to the attention of DOR, including its attorneys, is not protected from disclosure and may be reported for investigation and prosecution.

## Safety Issues



If you believe that DOR's child support services or efforts to enforce your child support order place you or your children at risk of physical or emotional harm, please contact us **immediately** at: **1-800-332-2733** or via email at: **csegen@dor.state.ma.us**



## Direct Deposit

Avoid the risk of a lost or stolen check – sign up for direct deposit of your child support payments online or by phone and your child support payments will go directly into your checking or savings account.

## DOR Customer Service



If you have any questions about child support services, or if you have information that would help us to enforce your child support order, please contact:

**Customer Service Bureau**  
**1-800-332-2733**  
**(Toll Free in U.S. and Puerto Rico)**  
**(1-800-255-5587 for the hearing impaired)**  
**Monday – Friday**  
**8:30 AM to 4:30 PM**

Our telephone automated voice response system (VRS) is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – with information on services and updates on your case, including recent payments and account status. To avoid busy signals, call after 5:00 P.M.

For more information about our services, to access your case information online, or to use any of our various online services, visit our website at:

**[www.mass.gov/dor](http://www.mass.gov/dor)**



## Information for Parents Who Receive Child Support

**Our mission is to protect the economic well-being of children by enforcing the financial responsibilities of parenthood.**

Raising a child is a big responsibility. Children require lots of love, care and attention to thrive—they need the emotional and financial support of both parents. Child support is a way for parents to share the financial responsibilities for their child even when they do not live together.

The Child Support Enforcement Division of the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) works to ensure that families receive child support payments on time and in full. If you are ordered by the court to receive child support, you are the **custodial parent** and you should read the following information carefully and keep it for reference.



**Massachusetts  
 Department Of Revenue  
 Child Support Enforcement  
 Division**



## How Child Support is Paid to You



Once the court issues a child support order, we notify the noncustodial parent's employer to withhold child support from the noncustodial parent's paycheck and send it to DOR.

If the noncustodial parent is self-employed or unemployed, DOR will send him or her a weekly bill with instructions on how to pay DOR.

All payments received by DOR are recorded and then sent to you. (If you receive public assistance benefits, the payments will be sent to the Department of Transitional Assistance to reimburse the state for payments made to you to support your child.)

Because of the time needed to process the order, it may take a few weeks for you to receive your first child support payment.



## Direct Payments

### You Must Not Accept Child Support Payments Directly from the Other Parent.

If you accept payments directly from the noncustodial parent, DOR will have no record of the payments you received. DOR will assume that the noncustodial parent did not pay and take enforcement actions to collect your child support.

Additionally, DOR may **close** your case if you accept direct payments.



## Underpayments

When a noncustodial parent does not pay child support, the past due support becomes an arrears balance. DOR will charge interest and penalties on the past due balance and will also begin using enforcement methods.

**Please Note:** For weekly orders, the number of payments owed in a month is equal to the number of Fridays in the month. If the other parent is paid every two weeks and support is deducted from his or her wages, it may appear that he or she is behind in 5 week months because with 2 pay periods, only 4 weeks of support will be submitted. As long as regular payments are made, the week will be made up the following pay period.

## Overpayments



If DOR sends you a payment in error, you are responsible for repaying the amount to which you are not entitled. DOR may adjust future child support payments payable to you to recover an overpayment and may seek court action against you if the full amount is not recovered.



## Changes

### You must notify DOR immediately if:

- ✓ Your address or phone number changes;
- ✓ You change employers;
- ✓ Your employer's address or phone number changes;
- ✓ You change your driver's license number;
- ✓ You change your Social Security number; or
- ✓ You change your name.

To report changes please fax us at **617-887-7540**, email us at [csegen@dor.state.ma.us](mailto:csegen@dor.state.ma.us) or call us at **1-800-332-2733**.

When DOR takes any action on your child support case, including a court hearing to enforce or modify your child support order, DOR is required to send notice to you at the address in our records. If you do not provide us with your new address and phone number you may not receive timely notice of any actions taken in your case to modify or enforce your court order and your case may be closed.



## How to Change a Court Order

Only the court can change or modify the amount of the child support order. Either parent may request a modification of the child support order if:

- ✓ Either parent's income changes;
- ✓ The child's custody changes; or
- ✓ Either parent's health care coverage changes.

You can ask DOR to review your case to see if a modification might be appropriate.

DOR will use the Massachusetts Child Support Guidelines in its review. The Guidelines consider several factors, including both parents' income and ability to earn income, the number of children involved and their ages, and the cost of health care coverage for the children.

You can review estimated changes to your child support order using the automated Guidelines Worksheet available on our website:

[www.mass.gov/dor](http://www.mass.gov/dor)



## Interest and Penalties

DOR imposes 1% interest and .5% penalties on all past-due child support monthly. Any interest is paid according to whom the debt is owed. DOR retains the penalties collected.

*The noncustodial parent can avoid interest and penalties by paying child support regularly.*

## Enforcing a Child Support Order



DOR uses many enforcement methods if the noncustodial parent does not pay child support. DOR is authorized by federal and state law to collect past-due child support without going to court.

DOR may use one or more of the following methods to collect past-due child support:

- ✓ Increase the amount withheld from the noncustodial parent's paycheck by 25%.
- ✓ Place a lien on the noncustodial parent's real estate or personal property.
- ✓ Seize the noncustodial parent's financial assets.
- ✓ Suspend business, trade, professional or driver's licenses or motor vehicle registrations held by the noncustodial parent.